

# In the United States Court of Federal Claims

## OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

No. 16-1333V

Filed: August 15, 2018

UNPUBLISHED

JULIE R. KORB,

Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

Special Processing Unit (SPU);  
Attorneys' Fees and Costs

*Jerome A. Konkel, Samster, Konkel & Safran, S.C., Milwaukee, WI, for petitioner.  
Colleen Clemons Hartley, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for respondent.*

### **DECISION ON ATTORNEYS' FEES AND COSTS<sup>1</sup>**

**Dorsey**, Chief Special Master:

On October 13, 2016, Julie R. Korb ("petitioner") filed a petition for compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. §300aa-10, *et seq.*,<sup>2</sup> (the "Vaccine Act" or "Program"). Petitioner alleged that she suffered "injuries, including rotator cuff tendinopathy, impingement syndrome and a partial tear, that were caused by the Trivalent Influenza vaccination that she received on Wednesday, September 18, 2013." Petition at 1; *accord.* Petition at ¶¶ 2, 12. On January 8, 2018, the undersigned issued a decision awarding compensation to petitioner based on the respondent's proffer. (ECF No. 37).

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<sup>1</sup> Because this unpublished decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action in this case, the undersigned intends to post it on the United States Court of Federal Claims' website, in accordance with the E-Government Act of 2002. 44 U.S.C. § 3501 note (2012) (Federal Management and Promotion of Electronic Government Services). In accordance with Vaccine Rule 18(b), petitioner has 14 days to identify and move to redact medical or other information, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy. If, upon review, the undersigned agrees that the identified material fits within this definition, the undersigned will redact such material from public access.

<sup>2</sup> National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755. Hereinafter, for ease of citation, all "§" references to the Vaccine Act will be to the pertinent subparagraph of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa (2012).

On July 16, 2018, petitioner filed a motion for attorneys' fees and costs. (ECF No. 42). Petitioner requests attorneys' fees in the amount of \$17,441.70 and attorneys' costs in the amount of \$1,841.24. *Id.* at 1. In compliance with General Order #9, petitioner filed a signed statement indicating that petitioner incurred no out-of-pocket expenses. (ECF No. 42-1 at 11). Thus, the total amount requested is \$19,282.94.

On July 17, 2018, respondent filed a response to petitioner's motion. (ECF No. 43). Respondent argues that "[n]either the Vaccine Act nor Vaccine Rule 13 contemplates any role for respondent in the resolution of a request by a petitioner for an award of attorneys' fees and costs." *Id.* at 1. Respondent adds, however, that he "is satisfied the statutory requirements for an award of attorneys' fees and costs are met in this case." *Id.* at 2. Respondent "respectfully recommends that the Chief Special Master exercise her discretion and determine a reasonable award for attorneys' fees and costs." *Id.* at 3.

Petitioner has filed no reply.

The undersigned has reviewed the billing records submitted with petitioner's request and finds a reduction in the amount of fees to be awarded appropriate for the reason listed below.

The undersigned finds it necessary to reduce the hourly rate of petitioner's counsel Mr. Konkell. Petitioner's counsel billed at a rate of \$312.00 for 2015 and 2016, \$358 for 2017 and \$370 for 2018. The 2018 rate of \$370 exceeds the previously awarded rate for petitioner's counsel which is \$368.00. The undersigned finds that the proposed paralegal rates from \$80 - \$112 per hour are reasonable. Therefore, attorneys' fees **requested are reduced by \$5.60.**

The Vaccine Act permits an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs. § 15(e). Based on the reasonableness of petitioner's request, the undersigned **GRANTS** petitioner's motion for attorneys' fees and costs.

**Accordingly, the undersigned awards the total of \$19,277.34<sup>3</sup> as a lump sum in the form of a check jointly payable to petitioner and petitioner's counsel Jerome A. Konkell.**

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<sup>3</sup> This amount is intended to cover all legal expenses incurred in this matter. This award encompasses all charges by the attorney against a client, "advanced costs" as well as fees for legal services rendered. Furthermore, § 15(e)(3) prevents an attorney from charging or collecting fees (including costs) that would be in addition to the amount awarded herein. See generally *Beck v. Sec'y of Health & Human Servs.*, 924 F.2d 1029 (Fed. Cir.1991).

The clerk of the court shall enter judgment in accordance herewith.<sup>4</sup>

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

**s/Nora Beth Dorsey**

Nora Beth Dorsey  
Chief Special Master

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<sup>4</sup> Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), entry of judgment can be expedited by the parties' joint filing of notice renouncing the right to seek review.